

A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the

K I N G,

At His

M A J E S T I E S

Free-Chappel of

W I N D S O R,

JUNE 13. 1680.

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By JOHN LAMBE, M. A. Chaplain, in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

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Published by His Majesties special Command.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishops Head in *S. Paul's Church-yard*. M DC LXXX.

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Mat. 16. 26.

*What is a Man profited if he shall gain the World, and lose his Soul?*

**T**O pursue the perfection of our Natures, or to govern the course of our Conversations with reference to some ultimate End, or chief Good, is not the result of Discourse or Reasoning, but an imbred Principle, which flows from the frame and constitution of our Natures. And it cannot be imagined that God, who doth nothing in vain, much less to evil purposes, should create this strong propension for no other end but to deceive our hopes, to frustrate our endeavours and to vex us for ever with unsatisfied desires; yea rather we may assure our selves that the Divine Goodness, who created the desire, hath also impressed such notices on our minds, as would direct and guide us, as it were by a Moral Instinct, to the knowledge and attain-

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ment of it's proper satisfaction.

But this is our unhappiness, that we our selves deface these Characters, we neglect the study of our own Natures, and rashly determine our chief good, without the consultation of our best Capacities, our noblest Appetites. And thus we stray from the good we seek, and flee from the felicity we pursue. Our Judgment is partial, our Ends are trivial, and our Love degenerate. Riches and Honour transport one, sensual Pleasures charm another, a third pursues Dominion; in short, the World, in some dress or other, is the God, the aim, the end of the generality of Men. Till we find at last, by the constant delusion of our hopes, that we sought for the living among the dead, for security on a precipice, or for Happiness in things without us. How greedily then should we embrace such Propositions, as would rectifie our Judgment, correct our errors, and point us infallibly to our best and truest interest, and to the Methods of obtaining it. And such is the Proposition of my Text, where Life and Death are set before us; whatsoever is glorious, whatsoever can be loved or hoped for, against all the false appearances of worth and beauty, against all that is miserable.



ble, wretched and abhorr'd. *For what is a man profited, &c.*

At the one and twentieth verse of this Chapter, our Saviour began to shew unto his Disciples, how he must go to *Jerusalem*, and suffer many things, and be killed, and raised again the third day. *S. Peter* partly through surprize, (for they knew not that these things ought so to be) partly through his love and tender affection to our Saviour, began to rebuke him, saying, *be it far from thee, O Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* But our Saviour interprets this rebuke of *S. Peter*, as an instance of his Love to the world, and improves the occasion into a discourse of self-denial, Ver. 24. *If any man will be my Disciple, he must not only be willing to part with me, but himself must take up his Cross and follow me.* He must be ready in mind and heart to relinquish all that is dear, even life it self, whensoever it shall stand in competition with the Will of God, and the Salvation of his Soul; *for what is a man profited, &c.*

Which words are an allusion to a known Proverb, *† An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth,* but all that a Man hath will he give for his Life. From the truth and Reason of

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of this proverbial comparison, our Saviour argues the incomparable value of the Soul; for if the propriety, the inheritance of the Universe, be refused even to a Proverb, in Comparison of Life; how much less shall the world in all it's profits, in it's best advantages, even life it self, contend in the ballance with the Salvation of the Soul?

And this is all that is necessary to be said for the Explication of the words, which of themselves are an entire Proposition, and do plainly assert this great truth, *viz.*

*That the gain of the whole World, is but an inconsiderable acquisition, in comparison of the Salvation of the Soul. Or,*

*The loss of the Soul is a greater evil than can be recompenced by the gain of the whole world.*

For the clearer illustration of which truth, I shall dispose my discourse into this method.

1. I shall impartially represent the profits of the world, with the nature, the quality, and the bounds of his advantage who shall gain them.

2. I shall consider and describe the Soul in all it's capacities and interests, and from thence determine what it is to save, and what to lose the Soul.

3. And lastly, I shall compare these Interests together, by unquestionable Measures and Rules

## before the KING.

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Rules of Profit and Loss, that from thence it may appear, how contemptible an interest he hath espoused, who to gain the world shall lose his Soul.

First, I shall impartially represent the profits of the world, with the nature, the quality, and bounds of his advantage who shall gain them.

The proposal, or preference of the Soul, as a better interest, neither denies nor extenuates the worth of temporal things, simply. But, on the contrary, a just and proper value, in it's place and kind, is here supposed, and must be allowed to the World, as a foundation of Comparison. For if the world, and all it's interests, were simply and intrinsically evil, the gain of the World and the loss of the Soul would be the self same thing numerically, and so the Comparison would be most absurd. It remains therefore as the granted Question of the Text, that the gain of the World is a real, substantial good in its place and kind. (And possibly Religion has been much endamaged by an indiscreet proposal of the severer duties of self-denial, simply, which are only required upon particular reasons, and under emergent circumstances.)

By the World then we shall understand  
what

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whatsoever is without us, whatsoever is apt to gratifie our Sensitive Appetites, and render our natural lives easie and desirable. It is,

1. A Negation of natural Evils, of Perils, Anxiety, Poverty, Slavery, Disgrace and Pain.

2. The Possession of the contrary goods, of safety, liberty, ease, dominion, pleasure, honour, plenty, strength, and friends.

3. Health, or the vigour of those natural appetites which are gratified by these enjoyments, and the pleasures arising thereupon. This is the nature, the quality, and bounds of his advantage who shall gain the world.

But all these interests, especially in their utmost measures, if they were ever pursued, yet were they never obtained by one Man. The Wisdom therefore of our Saviour in putting the question to the utmost possibility, *If he shall gain the whole World*, is very observable, because it takes in all the Circumstances which any man, of whatsoever State, or Place, can possibly be under: And anticipates the flatteries of the greatest Fortune: By gaining the World then, particular Persons are to understand such portions of these interests as are proper to the place we fill, or as we may reasonably propose to our selves, under our circumstances

cumstances, and in our Stations.

Now that these enjoyments, these advantages of natural Life, are good in their own Nature, and a real profit to the Possessors, will appear, if we consider these two things.

1. The nature and original Reason of happiness. What other Rules or directions have we, to determine our Judgment of Good and Evil, but the natural necessities, sensations, and desires of men. According to the account of the best Philosophers, *Bonum est quod cuiq; convenit, Voluptas est principium boni*. Convenience, Pleasure, or the satisfaction of Appetites, is the Principle of Good. But the essential capacities of Humane Nature are Sensitive and Animal, as well as Religious and Intellectual. The Divine Principle of Religion, Reflection, and Understanding, is lodg'd in an Earthly body, and sent into a World surrounded with the proper satisfactions of every desire, and endowed with Organs of the quickest sense. To determine therefore the happiness of such a Being, so mixt and composed of a corporal and angelick nature, by the perfections only of his Soul, without provision for the pleasures of the natural Life, is an imperfect unphilosophical account. For in whomsoever

*Arist. Eth.*

*Ἐξ ἧς δὲ  
τοῦ ἀλλοῦ  
καὶ ἡμᾶς οὐ-  
σως οἰαίμεθα  
ταῖς ἡμεῖς δὲ  
καὶ διαφέρει  
ἀνθρώπων. Por-  
phy. in vita  
Pyth.*

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the Appetites of the body are stifled, or exterminated, there is disease, and an unnatural mutilation; and in whom they remain ungratified, there must be dolour and uneasiness. 'Tis true, the improvements of the Mind, and a good Conscience, are an abundant satisfaction for the want of temporal Enjoyments, (as we shall discourse anon) but we speak not now comparatively, but of things as they are in their own Natures; and yet even a compensation is a satisfaction for something that is wanting, and implies either a fault, or an imperfection. There must be therefore a strict Philosophick Good in the things of the World, consider'd simply, in as much as they contribute to the pleasure of our being, and are the proper satisfactions of essential desires.

2. Neither is this all, but as the world hath a proper good in its own Nature, so are we obliged to esteem and value it by the Law of God. It was God that made the Spirits so subtle, the Nerves so sensible, the several amabilities in the Object, and the inclination in the Faculty, not to betray us into Evil, but to delight us with the dominion he hath given us of the world. Such Pleasures and Enjoyments therefore, as proceed from these desires,

fires,

fires, as these desires proceed from God and Nature; Reason, without Revelation, would instruct us to be good, and innocent. But if we consider the testimony which God himself hath given of them, the question will be without dispute: Who, after a strict review of his six days work, pronounced of the whole Creation, *that it was very good*; and who out of his especial favour to his own Image, put the man whom he had formed into the Garden of Paradise; and who, lastly, allures us to Obedience by the promise of these temporal rewards. Both the negation of every natural Evil, and the position of every natural Good, of Riches and Honour, of Safety, Preferment, Success and Reputation, are all promised by God, as Blessings and Rewards. And in the Gospel of our Saviour, though the clear Revelation of eternal Life is such an invincible motive as to which nothing can be added; yet as a collateral encouragement to those, who shall seek *the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, in the first place*, all things else are promised to be added to them. This, says *Plutarch*, is the foundation of devotion, trust, and confidence in God, that we believe he Governs the world, and that prosperity is of him.

Gen. 1.

Gen. 2.

1 Sam. 2. 30.

Pf. 21. 5.

22. 4.

10. 3.

Isa. 32. 17.

Mat. 6. 33.

Plut. de Superst.



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Wherefore then, since the things of the world agree with the Philosophy of good in general, and are design'd, by the wisdom of God, to entertain our sensitive inferiour faculties, and are promised, by his goodness, as blessings and rewards; we cannot but conclude, that the Possessions of the world are a substantial good in their own Natures; though of inferiour place and kind.

But the Objections drawn from such passages of our Saviour as insinuate the danger of Riches, and prescribe the strictest Self-denyal, the most entire resignation of our sensual Appetites, appear so plausible at the first sight, that we must not wholly pass them over. Yet the answer will be short and easie; because our Saviour himself hath taught us by his own interpretation, to put constructions upon all such Precepts and Positions: For when himself had declared, *Mark 10. 24. That it is easier for a Cammel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* He presently explains himself by those who trust in Riches: Which shews, that the Precepts and Passages of this nature are not intended to be understood literally; but in a sense. As sometimes in Comparison:

Lay



Lay not up for your selves treasure on Earth :  
 Take no thought for to morrow. Sometimes with  
 respect to emergent Circumstances, as when  
 the Apostles encouraged the Disciples to sell  
 their Possessions for the relief of the persecuted  
 Brethren. Sometimes personally, sometimes  
 habitually: *If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that  
 thou hast, and give to the poor ; and, whosoever  
 will be my disciple let him deny himself, and take  
 up his cross and follow me.* Be ready in mind  
 and heart to relinquish all whensoever it shall  
 be necessary. And that thus the Apostles un-  
 derstood our Saviour, is evident from that  
 of S. Peter, *Luk. 18.* Who glories of himself,  
 and the other Apostles that they had perform-  
 ed these duties; *we have left all, and followed thee :*  
 and yet S. Peter kept his House at Capernaum;  
 and the Apostles retained the Propriety and  
 Possession of their Ships and Houses.

To conclude this, the noblest Science is to  
 know ones self, to keep the mean, to preserve  
 the vigour, and gratifie the desires of all our  
 Faculties. Cato's best Emperour, was he who  
 should govern, not destroy, his Appetites.  
 Away then with all such superstitious Doctrines  
 as prescribe us to *live upon intuitive entertain-*  
*ments, to hide our selves from the Sun, or to*  
*dwell.*

*Coll. Grat in  
 vita R. P. Th.  
 Sanchez.*

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*dwell in a pleasant Garden, but never touch a Flower.* Which indeed is so far from the perfection of a Christian, or the design of my Text, that it is the disease of the mind, fullen, morose, distrustful, impotent. But on the other hand, to esteem the world above its appointed value, or to consider it as our Chief Good, is the most pernicious Folly, the greatest Calamity which can befall us : which leads me, in the second place,

2. To consider and describe the Nature, the Capacities and Interests of the Soul; which the Text prefers to our care and choice, rather before, and whatsoever becomes of the Profits of the World.

And we shall easily acknowledge, that we cannot comprehend the essence of the Soul, or the manner of it's operation, volition and understanding, it is inconsistent with the disadvantages of our present state. But by the acts, effects, and inward sensations of the mind, we certainly know, that it is neither Air, nor Fire, nor Blood, nor moving Numbers, but as it is defin'd by *Porphyrie*, *ὅτι αἰθερίως αὐτὴ ἀρδαν-  
τος*, a Being immaterial, self-moving, and immortal, a Principle of an independent, intellectual life, of Understanding, Judgment, Reflection, Conscience, Goodness, Providence, act-

acting as God freely, and for the sake of Ends. And the Objects about which these Faculties are exercised, and with which they are entertain'd, are the excellencies of the Divine Nature, to study and contemplate; the Divine Perfections, by which, as by a Rule, to judge, and govern our estimate of things; the works of Creation and Providence, the Government, the Wisdom, and the Histories of the World, to improve our minds with useful knowledge; divers Relations to God, and to one another, for the exercise of Devotion, Wisdom, Providence, Love and goodness.

This is the Nature, these are the Capacities, the Acts and Exercises of the Soul. From whence we collect, that the highest interest, or the perfection of the Soul, (considered in its natural capacities,) consists in the strength and vigour of these sensations and desires, in the habitual exercise of the faculties with their proper objects; in understanding clearly, in judging discreetly, in loving universally, in governing our lives wisely, in subduing our passions, in preserving the dominion of our Reason. It follows therefore, that to lose the Soul (according to this Original, simple sense) is to vitiate or destroy these Moral Appetites, and by

*Simpl. in Epist.*

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by a constant conversation with sensual Objects, to be wholly govern'd, to understand, to judge, esteem and love according to them.

And methinks the naked representation of this loss, is of it self sufficient to convince us, that the World, with all it's Profits, can be no Price for so inestimable a Jewel as the safety, no satisfaction for so great a calamity, as the loss of the Soul. For if we consider a man without Knowledge, without Wisdom, without Goodness; there is nothing left, whatsoever his circumstances in the World may be, to commend him to others, or reconcile him to himself. If his Passions are tame, he is the pity and contempt, if they rage, the regret and detestation of Mankind. He is a diseased, imperfect Creature, the ignoble parts are swell'd to an unnatural fullness, whilst the noble are wasted and shrivell'd into nothing. He hath lost the pleasures of a healthful Constitution, the delicate entertainments, the pure and unmixt delights which flow from all the Faculties, in the exercise of their proper functions; and is invested, on the contrary, with a dull Understanding, an unsatisfied Will, tumultuary vex'd and discomposed Affections.

But

But if this were all the loss, such is the degeneracy of men, how few would value it? We shall farther therefore consider the interest of the Soul, as it stands in the relation of a Subject to God our Law-giver, who hath obliged our obedience to an Institution of Religion, to a Rule of Life, with Sanctions of future Bliss and Misery. He then that despises Wisdom and Goodness, may yet *fear him who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*. This is the loss of the Soul emphatically, and which our Saviour principally intends, the displeasure of God, the future punishment of our Disobedience, and the loss of our Interest in the Rewards of Vertue, in the Joys of Heaven.

And though the nature and affections, the manner of the reception, and conveyance of these Felicities, are impossible in our present State to be understood distinctly; (as it is fabulously reported of the Ghost of S. *Jerom*, that it appeared to S. *Austin*, writing a Tract of the fullness of joy in Heaven, and asked him if he could measure the Waters in his Fist, or meet out the Heaven with a Span). Yet this we know in general, that it consists in the absence of all Evil, *tears shall be wiped away from all Faces*, no

C

for-

1<sup>st</sup>. 25. 8.  
1 Cor. 15. 54.

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Luk. 16.  
Jo. 14. 2.  
Pl. 16. 11.  
2 Cor. 4. 17.  
1 Cor. 2. 9.

1 Jo. 3. 2.

Rom. 8. 29.  
Phil. 1. 21.

forbidden fruit shall be there to tempt us, no adversaries to assault us, no impetuous desires to molest us; and in the affluence of all good. Whatsoever is contained in *Abraham's bosom*, in the house of our Father, in fulness of Joy, in eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can the heart of man conceive, is the felicity of that blessed State. Our understanding shall be perfected, in a clear discovery of the most excellent glory and loveliness of God, for *we shall see him as he is*. We shall then discern the beauty of his Holiness, the brightness of his Understanding, and the largeness of his Love. And because the Soul, in all its capacities of life and action, in judgment, choice, desire, and love, is absolutely govern'd by the understanding; Therefore our knowledge, our sense of the Divine Perfections, shall of necessity, transform us into the same Nature, quicken us into the same life, and invest us in the *joy of our Lord*, in the same felicities with himself? Our Wills shall be perfect with indefective holiness, our Affections shall be unalterably fixed and ravished with the ever-fresh and inexhaustible Treasures of his Beauty. In a word, our souls shall be struck with such a powerful sense of his unspeakable glory, his Image shall be so deeply im-

impres'd upon our minds, that our selves shall be changed into the likeness of his excellency, and entertain'd with the pleasures of his life. These are the glorious possibilities of the soul, the very privation whereof, or to be thrust from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, without the punishment of pain, is more than enough to be contained in losing the Soul, though a thousand worlds were to be set against it. Yet even this is not all, for the sanction condemns the disobedient to the punishment of pain, as well as to the punishment of loss. A guilty Conscience consummated with wretched horror and despair shall be his Portion. He shall be cast into outer darkness, where he shall be sure to find, whatsoever is contained in the vengeance of an Omnipotent God, who is a consuming fire.

Rev. 21. 8.  
Mar. 9. 43.  
Mat. 8. 11.  
Rom. 2. 9.  
Mat. 5. 26.  
Luk. 13. 28.

And thus I have impartially stated both the Nature and the Value, first of the world, then of the Soul: I proceed therefore, as I propos'd, in the last place,

3. To compare these Interests together, by the most infallible Rules and Tests of worth, that from thence it may appear how contemptible an interest he has espoused, who to gain the world shall lose his Soul. And amongst those



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many reasons of difference which might be found, I shall only select a few which seem to be the most considerable. And,

1. I shall compare them with respect to certainty.

2. With respect to Fulness or Satisfaction of the Will.

3. With reference to Duration. And there is no man but will readily acknowledge, that a certain, full, and everlasting good is incomparably preferable to a contingent, empty, transient interest.

1. But, first, the interest of the World is casual and uncertain: And if as great success in our pursuit as can be feigned, if the gain of the whole world be no advantage to him who shall lose his Soul, as the Text supposes, how much more unreasonable is it to prefer this interest, considering the continual Flux, the fugitive nature of temporal things. *He who pursues an interest out of his own power, courts unhappiness, says Seneca.* But our success in the pursuit of the world depends upon a train of Circumstances, which we may dispose and order in our thoughts, but not command. For if we were wise enough, as but few are, to lay our designs subtilly, to dispose  
Instruments

Πάντα πάντα  
χρὴ συντὰ ἐν-  
πλωτα. *Ar. in*  
*Ep.*

*Epist. 63.*



Instruments aptly, to foresee accurately, to mind our business, and govern our passions strictly; yet the Wisest often find their Purposes defeated, some Links of the Chain are broken.

*Quod quisq; vitet nunquam homini satis  
Cautum est in horas* Hor.

Because our condition is so dependent, that there is nothing brought to pass but by the assistance and meditation of others, by time, and by things without our power. Where then there are so many free agents, pursuing their respective private interests, as it were in a tacit conflict one upon another, there must be cross events and disappointments. This contrariety therefore of Will, the deceits of Correspondents, publick Calamities, and personal Follies, render our success in the world uncertain in the nature of the thing; besides, the overruling Providence of God, who causes all Designs and Interests to serve the Ends of his Alwise Councils.

*—————valet ima summis*

*Mutare, & insignem attenuat Deus.*

*He puts down the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble and meek.*

But

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But whosoever pursues the favour of God, and the Salvation of his Soul, may (with Reverence) be certain of obtaining it: Because the means and instruments are all within, between our selves and God alone. No cross conjunction of unforeseen Accidents can impede our progress. Deliberate Choice, and firm Resolution are infallible securities of success. But liberty of choice is essential to our Nature. Force in any sense, is Necessity, and therefore a contradiction to a reasonable Creature. It is a scandal to Religion and the Humane Nature, to suppose it impossible to Chuse the good, and Refuse the Evil. Vertue is the life, the pleasure, the rectitude of the Soul; who then but the wicked (who want Apology) can think it impossible to attain the perfection of our being; especially considering the great assistances which God so freely offers to those who are sincere, and willing to pursue this interest. That his holy spirit shall encourage our endeavours, and assist our weakness, that he will give us an heart of Flesh, and cause us to walk in his ways. And what shall we not do through the power of God that strengthens us? That's the first.

2. The world, if we could obtain it, is empty and

1 Cor. 7. 34.

*Boeth. de Cons.*

*Amar, sapit  
recte facit ani-  
mo quando obse-  
quitur suo. Illoc.  
Socr.*

Jo. 14.

Jer. 32. 39.

Ez. 11. 19.

and unsatisfying, allayed with vexations and uneasy cares; but the favour of God, and the rewards of Heaven, are such an unmixt and perfect good, as being once obtained, we can desire no more. The formal reason of good, is satisfaction, and of evil, desire unsatisfied. But the disproportion is so great, between the world, and our innate desires of perfect happiness, that it is impossible it should fill them. For the world is confin'd by the Wisdom of God, and fitted only for the Service of our Earthly, limited, inferiour faculties: and is therefore inadequate, both in Nature and measure, to the vast capacities, to the unbounded appetites of the mind. Whosoever then shall fix his happiness in the Possessions of the world, expects more from it than it can perform, and shall therefore be sure to be forever followed with cross events and new desires. For sick and unnatural appetites are infinite; Indulgence, in the Dropsie, doth but inflame the thirst; the disease is within, and the desire insatiable. *Al' ὅς βίωσιν ἀντιματ' ἐγλήσας ἐν ἐξαιρέσει τὰ τῆς ζωῆς λυσσύντα.* *Crescit indulgens sibi divus hydropsi nec sitim pellit nisi causa morbi jugetis venis—* Hor. *Plus, de Tranq.* Whatsoever the changes of Fortune or Life may be they can never remove the vexations of the mind, which arise from false Opinion, says *Plutarch*; The Star is lost we steer.

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In vita The-  
mist.

de trag.

steer an unknown course, and sail in an immense Sea of wild and extravagant desire: All this is natural and necessary. But besides the disproportion between the Object and the Faculty, we our selves create vexation to our selves. Our inordinate love of the World betrays us into fears and jealousies, and fills us with envy and ambition, which cause us to judge of things, not as they are in their own nature, but with respect to others, and so removes our happiness yet farther out of our own power; as *Plutarch* writes of *Themistocles*, that he raved and walk'd about the Streets at midnight, vexed and tormented with the triumph of *Meliades*. *Ἐνθυμία γὰρ δὲ μὲν χαμένη πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ πλυσσών.* Inordinate desire hinders even that imperfect satisfaction, which might otherwise be found in the Object we pursue, as the same Author observes. Perfect happiness then, or full content, is not to be found in the Enjoyments of the world.

*Nec gemmis, nec purpura ve-  
nale, nec auro. Hor.*

What shall we say then? Is man alone de-  
signed

sign'd by God to be the sport, the mock of Nature? Are we the only Creatures which were made for ever to pursue, but never obtain our happiness? No surely; *Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thy Self, and our Soul is unsatisfied till it rests in thee: Thy favour is better than Life, and at thy right hand there is fulness of Joy and Pleasure.* In a word, whosoever by Vertue, and Obedience, shall obtain the Rewards of Heaven, and the Love of God, are under a full enjoyment, a compleat Possession of absolute perfect and unlimited goodness. For passionate Fondness, is infirmity, and therefore incompetent to the Love of God, or the perfection of the Attribute, which consists in the most substantial effects and operations; not only in shining upon us, but in making us luminous with his brightness; and happy in the enjoyment of his perfections, in the communication of his felicities.

The will, of necessity therefore, shall be prevented, fill'd and satisfied; because there is nothing farther to be desired; for all the good which is in any Object, is derived from this Original, simple good, which we shall then enjoy. And this is no *Platonick* rapsodie, but the necessary

D

effects

Pf. 63. 3.  
Pf. 16.  
1 Pet. 1. 8.  
Rom. 14. 17.

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effects of the Divine Love, and agrees with the sober experience of Pious Men, whose Souls enjoy a full content, and easiness in God, though the methods of conveyance are inexplicable. That's the Second.

3. Thirdly, and lastly, If we were sure to gain the world, and if it were possible to be fully satisfied in the acquisition; yet is our possession uncertain, our enjoyment short; but the Interest of the Soul is everlasting.

No present State, whatsoever it may be, can denominate a Man happy; A taste of happiness, without continuance, is but a mockery, a vexation. It is propriety, and stability which commend an Interest, and pass it into the relation of Felicity.

*Ovid.*

————— *Ultima Semper*  
*Expectanda dies.* —————

But the natural condition of Earthly things is frail and fugitive: All those Reasons which render it so difficult to gain them, render it as hard to preserve them when obtained. Personal Follies, publick Calamities, sudden accidents, fraud and avarice, Sin and Death,

do

do all oppose the security of our present state. But nothing can more disparage the value of the world, than this continual motion, flux, and change, to which it is liable; because the loss of what we once possess is a greater calamity than never to enjoy. For *Bajazet* to change his *Seraglio* for a Cage, for *Valerian* to become the Foot-stool of his Enemy: for *Perseus* King of *Macedon*, but the fourth from *Alexander*, to be led in Chains before the Triumphant Chariot of *P. Emilius*, were greater Calamities than never to have been happy.

*Turk. Hist. in  
Regn. Baj.*

*Cassiodor.  
Plut. in vit.  
Emil.*

But if our possessions of the World were firm, and stable in their Nature, our enjoyment, howsoever, would be short and transient, because our own foundation is in the dust; our life is uncertain, and our age as nothing. No period of life, no state or quality, is secure a moment from the arrest of death.

*Job. 4. 24.  
1 Pet. 1. 4.  
2. 19.*

*Omnes eodem cogimur, &c. Hor.*

We are all under the same necessity, all our destinies are hurried in the same Urn; sooner or later we shall all be carried into Eternal exile. How many have we our selves ob-

D 2 served.



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served, who in the height of their Pleasures, in the vigour of their age, in the midst of their hopes have been suddenly snatched away.

*Tu secunda marmora  
Locas sub ipsum fumus. Hor.*

The polished Marbles we are so busily designing into a magnificent Seat, of a sudden are become the Ornaments of our Tomb.

And it must needs be very terrible to those who have no other end or Interest, but their Possessions in the world, to consider how suddenly they may, how soon they shall be deprived of all their hope, of all their good. This consideration depresses the value of the world into vanity it self, and in a manner ballanceth the inequalities of Fortune, and makes it no very great matter whether we derive from a Scepter, or a Shepherds Crook.

*Lay not up for your selves then Treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust can corrupt, or Thief break through and steal; but by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, Immortality, and Eternal life. Pursue the interest of the Soul which is everlasting.* Yet



Yet such is the degeneracy of men, that we are willing to believe, and are content with a state of non-existence, of eternal night, rather than govern our lives on Earth, as may consist with the hopes of a blessed Immortality.

But it is impossible to extirpate the Expectation of Mankind. The independent Powers of the Soul, the judgment of Conscience, the consent of Nations, will be always such irrefragable Testimonies of a future State, as we shall never be able to Subdue. Besides the positive Revelation of God, that *the Spirit shall return to him that gave it*, that all the *Joys of Heaven*, which we now described, *shall endure for ever*, that the *City is continuing*, the *House eternal*, and the *Crown shall never fade away*. Heb. 5. 9.  
13. 14.  
Luk. 16. 9.

We shall then be the Treasure, the Children, and the Friends of God; whose infinite Perfections shall be always present, and we shall always be in a capacity of Enjoyment. No age shall enfeeble our percipient Faculties, a thousand years shall be but as a day. No Reasons of Sin, of Punishment, or of Tryal (and there are no other) shall interpose to discontinue or abate the Pleasures of this happy life. But if we shall neglect this everlasting happiness,

## A Sermon Preached

happinefs, the lofs or punishment of the Soul, in the sense I explained it, shall be eternal too. *What then shall it profit a man to gain the world, and be cast into fire unquenchable, where the Worm shall never dye.*

But if we should suppose it would continue but a thousand years, or half the time, the Argument is strong enough, and would bear the zeal of our Saviour in this compassionate Expostulation of my Text, *What shall it profit a man, &c* But there is never a plain syllable in the book of God, which favours the purgation, or Annihilation of Souls. And there is nothing more evident than that the Spirit of God intends we should believe the loss or punishment to be everlasting; because he hath chosen the most apposite phrases which can be imagin'd to express an unlimited Eternity: *The worm shall never dye; the Fire shall never be quenched, and the smoak shall ascend for ever and ever. What then shall it profit a man to gain the world, a casual, empty, transient Interest; and lose his Soul, a certain, full, and everlasting good?*

Mat. 7. 12.  
Rev. 20. 10.  
Luk. 3. 17.

Now the use of this discourse is Infinite, because it is concern'd in every Action of our lives;

lives; it Directs our Choice, governs our Will, and regulates our Affections. But I am afraid I have already trespassed upon your patience, I shall therefore consider but one Inference, and so conclude: namely this,

That the gain of the world, with the safety of the Soul, is the most perfect, happy state. Inf. That Riches, and Honour, with Vertue and Piety, render a man more exactly happy, than either without the other. Which indeed is rather a part of the Doctrine it self, than a Deduction from it: For, *What shall it profit a man to gain the World, and lose his Soul*, seems to allow the Possessions of the World, with the safety of the Soul, to be the best advantage, the most happy state. And,

1. In general, because our whole selves, in all our Capacities, may be Filled and Satisfied. The craving desire or emptiness of any Faculty, is Misery in its degree; but chiefly because of the kind agreement, the mutual assistance and ministration of these several Interests, to the nourishment and increase, to the exercise and enjoyment of each other. The Rich and Honourable have great Opportunities of Knowledge and Vertue above other men. Their

time.

*Status, omnium bonorum aggregatione, perfectus. Boeth.*

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Sen. Epist.

time is their own, their minds are easie, they may converse with the best Company, and study the best Authors for the improvement of their Minds. And they are always provided with the necessary Requisites, the chief Instruments in the Practice and Exercise of Vertue. For the Government of our Passions, the Regulation of our Appetites and Affections under our Possessions and Enjoyments of the World, are the proper Subjects of our Vertue and Victory. A poor Man's Sphere is narrow and confin'd, his Religion is negative, and his Vertue chiefly in his Will: But the Rich may fulfill the whole Law, redeem Captives, relieve the Oppressed, visit the Fatherless, patronize the Poor, bless the World. Indeed, there is scarce a Vertue, Personal, Political, or Divine, but requires the presence of Earthly Things as the necessary Instruments of its Practice. And hence *Pythagoras* himself commends a due regard of our Worldly Interest, because it helps the Soul labouring after Vertue.

Ἐρωτηθέντι  
δὲ τὴν συνεργίαν  
πρὸς ἀρετὴν  
ὁ δαδύσας ἀν-  
ταν.  
Hier. in Aur.  
Car.

And thus to use the World for the interest of the Soul, for the exercise and increase of Vertue, is the best Method we can possibly consult

consult for the most pure and pleasant Enjoyment of the World it self.

For Religion stops the Fountain of all the Allays and Evils of the World; it rectifies our Judgment, and restrains our Passions, it acquaints us with our Imperfections, and delivers us from importunate desires, from Envy and Ambition, from the anxious Fears of Chance and Death; which flow from false Opinion, and ever insinuate themselves where Vertue is not prepossess'd. It is indeed the only Ballast of Prosperity.

And as it separates the Ills, so it improves and meliorates whatsoever is good and pleasant in the World. It restores us to our selves, and gives us an absolute Dominion over what we possess. It preserves a healthful Constitution, and, by a mixture of different Entertainments, it prevents that loathing of Pleasures, which arises from the constant presence of them: It is a great improvement and addition of Honour; it gives reality to Titles, and makes inconstant Fame stable and eternal.

*Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo,  
Fama Marcelli, micat inter omnes  
Julium sedus, velut inter ignes*

*Luna minores.*

E

The

Hor.

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The practice of Vertue, says Seneca, gives a lustre to a man, and makes him shine as light. *Quantum Dii boni decoris, quantum ponderis adderint !* What weight, what beauty do they add ? When we meet him we shall start and fall back, as at the presence of a God, and silently pray, that it may be safe to look upon him, and with a trembling voice we shall be ready to say, (says he) with Virgil,

----- *Namq; haud tibi vultus*  
*Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat*-----

*The Voice the Countenance is more than Humane.*

To conclude, Let us remember that Christian self-denial is but the reduction of our selves to our selves, and a melioration of our present state. That all forbidden Appetites are Artificial and Unnatural, the Effects of Disease, and the Symptoms of Death. That there is no competition, thanks be to God, at the present, between the safety of our Souls, and the preservation of our Estates in the active liberal sense ; no Doctrines of Perfection to confound and cheat us, no narrow, illiberal,  
Phari-

Pharisaical Opinions to fill us with scruple. And as for the moral, habitual resignation of the World it is every way our interest. To be loose and free, to use it as if we used it not, to will what God wills, and to be content with such a mixture of Good and Evil as infinite Wisdom shall determine to us, is the only way to be happy. But to devote our selves to the world, to govern our lives carelessly, to sin presumptuously, to neglect our souls, to forfeit our interest in the favour of God, and incur the punishment of Hell, is such a Calamity as can never be recompensed: *For what shall it profit a man to gain the World, and lose his Soul?*

*Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all honour, praise, and glory, now and for ever. Amen.*

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F I N I S.

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